



Your guide to Pearson qualifications

FOR STUDENTS AND PARENTS

Get started

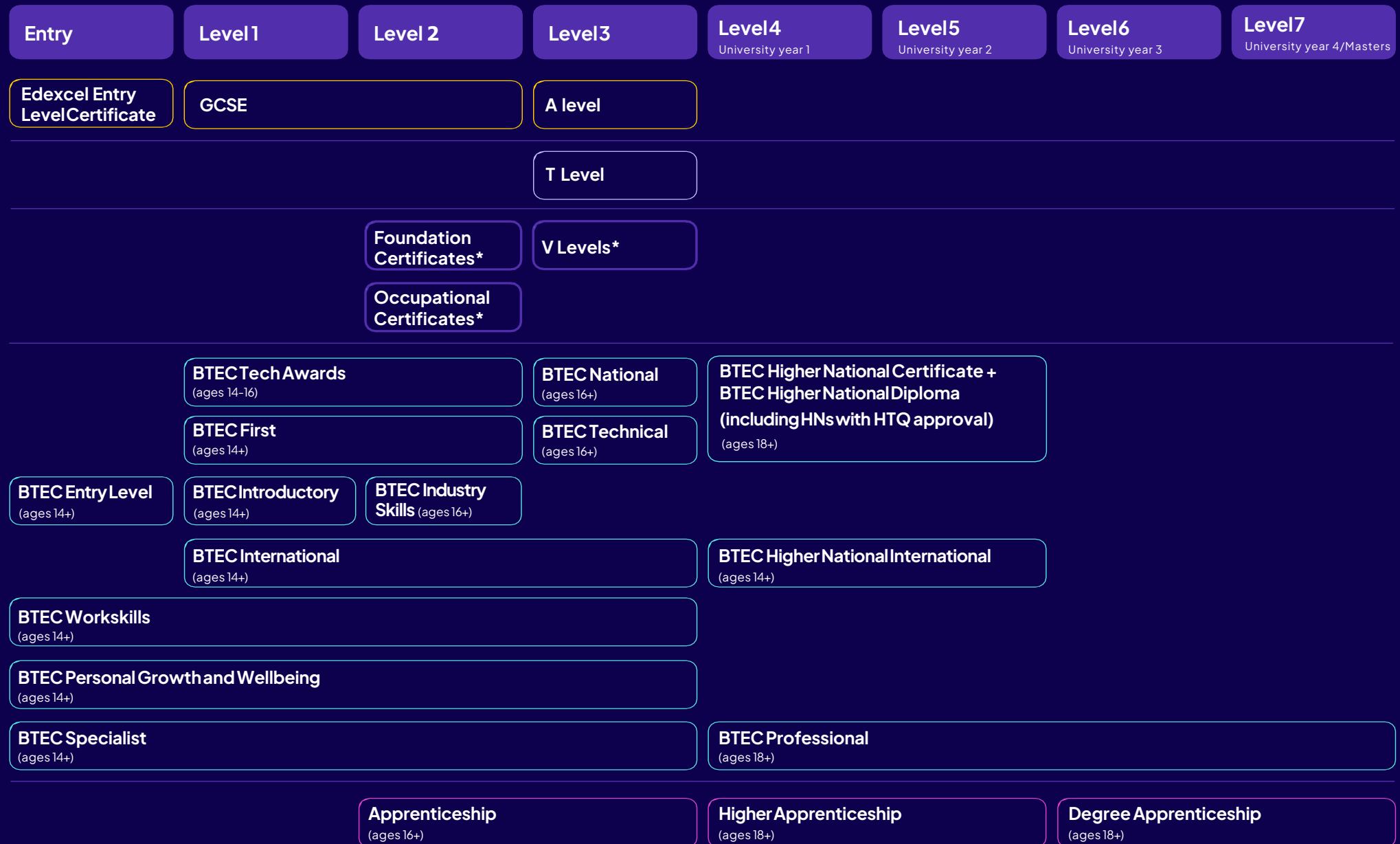


Contents

- [Pearson Qualifications](#)
- [Qualification changes](#)
- [Comparison of post-16 qualifications](#)
- [BTEC](#)
- [BTEC and University](#)
- [VLevels](#)
- [VLevels and University](#)
- [Foundation Certificates](#)
- [Occupational Certificates](#)
- [TLevels](#)
- [Alevels](#)
- [BTEC Higher Nationals](#)
- [Apprenticeships](#)
- [GCSEs](#)
- [Tech Awards](#)



Pearson Qualifications



*From September 2027 onwards

From qualification change to every learner's next step

Post-16 qualification reform in England is changing what qualifications come next. Choosing what to study after 16 years old is an important decision, and we want learners and their families to feel confident about the options available. New Post-16 options in England will introduce new pathways designed to help you develop your knowledge, skills and path for what comes next.

Current qualifications, including BTEC Nationals will be phased out gradually over the next four years. From September 2027, new V Levels, Foundation Certificates and Occupational Certificates will be introduced across different subjects.

You can choose BTEC with confidence. Current BTEC Level 3 Nationals, BTEC Nationals (AAQs), BTEC Level 2 Technicals, Firsts and Skills remain fully approved and available until the new qualifications are introduced in the subject area.



Read more about your qualification options in this guide. Speak to your local School or College about the options they offer.

Quick comparison of post-16 qualifications

Qualification	V Levels	BTEC	T Levels	A Levels
Description	Broad vocational qualifications focused on applied learning across a sector.	Career-based vocational qualifications	Technical qualifications with specific occupational route plus industry placement	Subject based academic qualifications
GLH	360	180 to 1080	Equivalent to 3 A Levels (generally 1080)	360
Duration	2 years	2 years	2 years	2 years
Availability	First teach September 2027 Find out more	Available now Find out more	Available now Find out more	Available now Find out more

BTEC

BTEC (which stands for the Business & Technology Education Council) offers high-quality, career-focused qualifications grounded in the real world of work.

BTEC courses focus on skills-based learning and are designed around themed units. Rather than testing everything at the end, BTECs are tested throughout the course using assessments based on real-life scenarios.

This practical approach allows you to develop and apply the knowledge, skills and behaviours that employers and universities are looking for. With a BTEC qualification, you will learn and develop key skills such as:



Organisation
and working
deadlines



Ability to
learn and
adapt



Sector-specific
skills and
knowledge

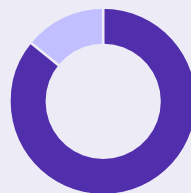


Initiative
and problem
solving



73%

of students say they want to learn about topics that are more relevant to them and their lives.



86%

of students say they want to learn skills that help them get a job.

1 in 5

of the UK adult working population have a BTEC, so they are qualifications that all employers recognise.



“

Being the only one out of 150 students in year 11 to undertake a BTEC qualification as part of an apprenticeship, was the best decision I could ever make.”

Santina

BTEC Level 3 National in Civil Engineering



BTEC and University

BTEC Level 3 Nationals qualify for UCAS points towards your university application in the same way as A levels and AS levels. This chart shows how many points each BTEC National is worth, based on the grade you achieve.

BTEC National Grade	90-credit Diploma	Diploma	Extended Diploma
D*D*D*	–	–	168
D*D*D	–	–	160
D*DD	–	–	152
DDD	–	–	144
DDM	–	–	128
DMM	–	–	112
D*D*	84	112	–
D*D	78	104	–
DD	72	96	–
DM	60	80	–
MMM	–	–	96
MMP	–	–	80
MM	48	64	–
MPP	–	–	64
MP	36	48	–
PPP	–	–	48
PP	24	32	–

BTEC National Grade	Certificate	Extended Certificate & Subsidiary Diploma	Foundation Diploma
D* (Distinction*)	28	56	84
D (Distinction)	24	48	72
M (Merit)	16	32	48
P (Pass)	8	16	24

If you're also studying A levels and want to compare UCAS points, here's a quick guide.

Grade	A level	AS level
A*	56	–
A	48	20
B	40	16
C	32	12
D	24	10
E	16	6

V Levels

Your interest and ambitions can help shape what you study after 16. V Levels are a new qualification designed to sit alongside A Levels and give you more choice when planning your next steps.

V Levels combine essential industry knowledge with practical, work-related skills, helping you build academic knowledge alongside real-world experience. They can support progression to higher education, apprenticeships and employment.

With the flexibility to combine V Levels with other V Levels, A levels, or Level 2 English and Maths, you can create a programme of study that reflects your strengths, interests and future goals.



V Levels are new qualifications being rolled out across different subjects from 2027 to 2030. Contact your local education provider to explore your V Level options



V Level and University

V Levels qualify for UCAS points towards your university application in the same way as BTECs, A levels and AS levels. This chart shows the number of points each V Level will be worth, based on the grade achieved. Further information, advice and guidance will be available in the coming months.

Grade	A Level – UCAS Tariff points	V Level – UCAS Tariff points
A*	56	56
A	48	48
B	40	40
C	32	32
D	24	24
E	16	16
P	Not available	12
U	0	0



What the P grade is: Ofqual has confirmed V Levels are graded A*–E plus a P ‘pass’ grade, with U for ungraded. P sits below E as the lowest passing outcome – a genuine pass, not an unclassified result – and has no A Level equivalent, which is why UCAS gave it its own value of 12 points.

Foundation Certificates

Foundation Certificates are new Level 2 qualifications designed for students aged 16+ who are ready to take their next step but are not yet ready for Level 3 study.

Delivered as a one-year vocational qualification, they help you strengthen your subject knowledge, develop essential study skills, and build the confidence needed to progress towards your future goals.



Foundation Certificates are new qualifications being rolled out across different subjects from 2027 to 2030. Speak to your local School or College about the options they offer.



Occupational Certificates

Occupational Certificates are new Level 2 qualifications designed for students aged 16+ who want to develop the skills and knowledge needed for a particular occupation or industry sector.

Through applied learning and assessment, you will gain the skills required to enter the workplace.



Occupational Certificates are new qualifications being rolled out across different subjects from 2027 to 2030. Speak to your local School or College about the options they offer.



T Levels

T Levels are two-year programmes offering an alternative to A levels and other 16–19 courses. Taken after GCSEs, one T Level is equivalent in size to three A levels.

They have been developed in collaboration with employers, to ensure the content meets the needs of industry and prepares you for work.

Your T Level will provide you with the knowledge and experience needed to open the door to skilled employment, an apprenticeship or higher-level study, including Higher Technical Qualifications and university.

[Visit our T Levels student page](#) ➔



Fernanda

T Level in Digital
Production, Design
and Development

“

The T Level programme provided a unique blend of theoretical knowledge and practical experience that has been essential in shaping my career in AI and digital solutions.”



A levels

A levels are Level 3 qualifications – sometimes called General Certificates of Education (GCE) or Advanced levels. They are normally studied after Level 2 BTECs or GCSEs and involve studying the theory of a subject combined with some investigative work and are studied full-time over two years at school or college.

From September 2027, A levels can be taken alongside BTEC Nationals and V Levels, providing you with a mix of academic and practical skills – a great combination as you move to higher education or into employment.

Whether studied as standalone qualifications or combined with V Levels and BTEC Nationals, A levels support progression to higher education at college or university, an apprenticeship or work.

[Find out more about A Levels](#) →



Roo

A level and BTEC
student

“

I was able to study
A levels in the subjects I
loved alongside my BTEC
which provided me with
hands-on experience.”



BTEC Higher Nationals

You may also choose to go into Higher Education via a BTEC Higher National Certificate (equivalent to first year of a degree) or Higher National Diploma (equivalent to first two years of a degree) before progressing to a full degree.

BTEC Higher Nationals are internationally recognised, career-focused higher education qualifications that allow you to either 'top-up' to a degree at [300+ universities worldwide](#) or enter the world of work.

With over 60 subject areas to choose from, BTEC Higher Nationals are co-designed with industry to provide both real-world experience and academic knowledge. This ensures you'll leave with the expertise demanded by businesses and industries, with the flexibility to go straight into employment or continue to a degree.

[Download Higher Nationals learner guide](#) →



Tim

BTEC Higher
National Diploma in
Sport

“

It wasn't just the knowledge that I gained studying BTECs at a variety of levels, but also the employability skills that have really helped me in the workplace.”



Apprenticeships

An apprenticeship is an exciting and practical way to get your career off to a flying start.

You'll be in a real job, meaning you will be earning while you're learning, with opportunities to put the knowledge and skills you learn into practice in the workplace.

You can start an apprenticeship from the age of 16 and over. Apprenticeships are available across a wide range of industry sectors and span levels 2 to 7 providing great progression opportunities, whether into highly skilled jobs or higher education.

[Visit our Apprenticeships student page](#) ➔



Rayhan

L3 Digital Marketing
Apprenticeship

“

My apprenticeship experience has been life changing! I have met so many new people, many of whom are highly experienced in their industries and learned so much.”



GCSEs

GCSEs (General Certificates of Secondary Education) are taken by 14 to 16-year-old students in England, Wales and Northern Ireland and take two years to complete.

You can opt to combine core GCSE subjects such as Mathematics, English and Science, with BTECs in vocational subjects you are interested in - a great way to develop your practical skills alongside your academic study and tailor your learning to your strengths and goals.

Whether combined with BTECs or as stand-alone qualifications, GCSEs offer you a route to a range of level 3 study routes such as A levels, T levels, BTEC Nationals or an apprenticeship.

[Find out more about GCSEs](#) →



BTEC Tech Awards

BTEC Tech Awards are Key Stage 4 (KS4) vocational qualifications. Designed specifically for 14-16 year olds, they can be studied in schools alongside GCSEs.

Designed to equip you with applied knowledge not normally acquired through GCSEs, giving you a taste of a particular sector, sector-specific and transferable skills.

These courses are assessed using a combination of vocational assignments, practical tasks and written assessments as relevant to each subject area.

BTEC Tech Awards offer you a route to a range of level 3 study routes such as A levels, T levels, BTEC Nationals or an apprenticeship.



Ryan

BTEC Tech Award
Sport student

“

My BTEC Tech Award was both challenging and rewarding. The balance of theory and practical elements kept learning engaging.”





[Explore more on the Pearson website](#)